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May 29. 1799.

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from the author

AN

ADDRESS and PRAYER,

DELIVERED AT THE

INTERMENT

OF THE LATE

Rev. WILLIAM BLAKE,

At *CREWKERNE*,

The 3d Day of April, 1799.

By JOSHUA TOULMIN, D. D.

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ADDRESS.

WE are, now, aſſembled to perform the laſt, ſad offices of reſpect and friendſhip: and, with this view, are gathered round a grave. A grave, open to receive, and, for ever, to encloſe, in its cold, damp walls, one, who, not long ſince, joined us, in the pleaſing intercourſes of active life, is a ſerious, affecting ſpectacle. Let us approach to it, with ſerious, ſolemn thoughts. Let us look into it, with the eye of devout reflection, and with ſoberneſs of mind.

It is the narrow, ſilent, dark abode of the young and great, as well as of the poor and aged. They "ſhall lie down alike in the duſt, and the "worms ſhall cover them." Here the deſigns of the active and enterpriſing periſh: and human glory ſuffers an eternal eclipſe. Here theſe ſtrong and beautiful frames ſhall go into corruption, and moulder into duſt. Here we leave the ingenious and learned, the philoſopher and divine, the uſeful Chriſtian and the citizen of the world. Here talents, and abilities, and worth, and gene-

rous ſervices, are wrapped up in a long, long ſleep; and ſhall not awake "till the heavens be no more." Often, very often, hath it been opened to receive the neighbour and the friend, and to conceal him for ever from our ſight. To this laſt home, after a few years, ſhall ſome friends and neighbours follow us, and leave us for ever in this abode of forgetfulneſs and ſilence. This is the doom of all men; and ſhall not we, who are "living, lay it to heart?" The grave, around which we now ſtand, is an awful memento of the ſhortneſs of life, even when it reaches to threeſcore years and ten; and of the end, which, finally, awaits us. What ear can be deaf? What heart can be unaffected, while it addreſſeth to us theſe mournful leſſons, written, as it were, on its ſides, and inſcribed on the ſkulls and the bones, which are thrown out of it? "All fleſh "is as graſs, and all the glory of man as the "flower of the graſs; the graſs withereth, and "the flower thereof fadeth away. It is ap-"pointed unto men once to die. What man is "he that liveth and ſhall not ſee death: and "who ſhall deliver his ſoul from the grave? "Man, that is born of a woman, is of few days; "he fleeth as a ſhadow, and continueth not. "One generation paſſeth away, and another

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"cometh."—With theſe leſſons of mortality doth the grave addreſs us: and to each one of us it applieth the awful warning, "Duſt THOU art; "and unto duſt ſhalt THOU return." Whoſoever hath an ear to hear, let him hear.

This warning cometh with peculiar force to *us*, who are at the grave of a *friend*, endeared to us by many virtues; endeared to us by the chearfulneſs and benevolence of his temper, and by the counſels of prudence, which, on many occaſions, his wiſdom and knowledge of human affairs ſuggeſted. How different is this day from thoſe pleaſant days to return no more, when advice was taken from his lips, and his company enlivened and cheered our ſocial hours! Heart-felt grief teſtifieth, that he was dear to us. But, ah! the ties and connections of life are diſſolved: the bonds of blood and friendſhip are broken: the ear is cloſed to the caſe, which we would whiſper into it: the tongue is ſilent: and the benign countenance will not again brighten the friendly or domeſtic circle. Could the deceaſed friend and relative, while we commit, with ſolemn decorum and ſorrowful affection, his body to the earth, ſpeak to us from the grave, we may with reaſon, ſuppoſe, that he would part from us with theſe ſacred admonitions: "Ceaſe

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" ye from man, whoſe breath is in his noſtrils. " Acquaint yourſelves with GOD, and calm your " mournful paſſions and anxious thoughts to " peace: in GOD, the living GOD, to whoſe years " there is no end, put your truſt. *His* counſels " are unchangeable: *his* word is eternal truth: " *his* friendſhip can never fail: *his* thoughts of " kindneſs cannot periſh in the grave: nor can " death itſelf ſeparate you from the love of GOD, " which is in Chriſt Jeſus." At the ſuggeſtion of this conſideration, comfort and hope ſpring up. For while we are gathered round the grave of a *man*, and a *friend*,

We alſo ſtand at the grave of a *Chriſtian*: of a Chriſtian, who loved and ſtudied the goſpel: whoſe ſincere piety, unblameable manners, and worth of character adorned it. This thought relieves our ſad and ſorrowful reflections. The goſpel, the glorious goſpel of the ever bleſſed GOD, which our deceaſed friend believed and practiſed, hath brought life and immortality to light.—Jeſus Chriſt, the miniſter of divine reconciliation and mercy to our ſinful world, to the dying ſons of Adam, preached the words of eternal life. By " his reſurrection from the dead, the GOD " and FATHER of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt hath " begotten us again to the lively hope of an in-

" heritance,

" heritance, incorruptible, undefiled, and that " fadeth not away. Jeſus Chriſt hath the keys " of death and the unſeen world." The ſublime, glorious, and unparalleled character he ſuſtains is this dignified one, of the RESURRECTION and the LIFE. We may mourn. At the grave of Lazarus, " Jeſus," though about to raiſe him from the dead, " wept." But we " ſorrow not as " thoſe who are without hope; for if we believe " that Jeſus died and roſe again, even ſo them that " ſleep in Jeſus will God bring with him." This faith enlivens the chamber hung with black; and darts rays of brightneſs into the grave. Jeſus will come again, with power and great glory, to call his ſleeping ſervants from their duſty beds, and to give unto them eternal life. Leaving our friends and relatives in the grave, we look into it with our eyes full of tears, and ſee nothing in it but darkneſs, duſt, and corruption. But when this grave and all graves ſhall open, at the ſound of the trumpet, and the voice of the archangel, myriads of glorious forms will come out of them, to life and happineſs, incorruptible and immortal. The friend, the Chriſtian, we now bury, was mortal: the friend, whom we ſhall then embrace, will be immortal, and die no more. This is the hope of the goſpel; this the

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conſolation of Chriſtianity. Where all was gloom and darkneſs, a bright proſpect opens: a ſublime hope invites the mourner to wipe away his tears, and chaſes away diſtreſs and anxiety from his heart. They who now weep, ſhall then rejoice with fulneſs of joy.

Let another reflection be admitted; we are at the grave of a Chriſtian *miniſter*; devoted, particularly, to the maintenance of that cauſe of religious "liberty, wherewith Chriſt Jeſus has "made us free," as well as to the general intereſt of righteouſneſs and piety, and the moral edification of the ſouls of men: of "an able miniſter of the New Teſtament," well furniſhed with gifts and graces, for the ſervice of his divine maſter, and, forty-five years, the faithful and diligent, the beloved and reſpected paſtor of this church. Almoſt as ſoon as had withdrawn from ſtated public ſervices, the ſcene of duty and uſefulneſs entirely cloſed: and he is no more. "Our "fathers were are they? And the *prophets*, do "they live for ever?" The Chriſtian miniſter, by reaſon of the common ſentence of death, is not ſuffered to continue. But the *word* of GOD, which he preached, endureth for ever. Jeſus Chriſt, our ſaviour, hath received an unchangeable prieſthood. The goſpel remaineth, as an incor-

incorruptible ſeed of truth and piety, through all the revolutions of time and generations of men. We rejoice in the perſuaſion, that "the gates of "hell," or of *the grave**, "ſhall not prevail "againſt it." We lament the deceaſed miniſter of righteouſneſs: but we will adore, with gratitude, the providence which formed him for his ſituation, and preſerved him ſo many years to fill it, and to diſcharge its duties, with decorum and reputation.

You, Chriſtians, whom our eſteemed brother ſerved in the goſpel, will remember with affection and reſpect the judgment, fervor, and diligence with which he aſſiſted your faith, holineſs, and comfort: with reſpect, you will recollect the prudence and propriety of his conduct; the candor and liberality of his ſpirit, which, in advancing years roſe above the more contracted biaſſes of early life: the earneſtneſs and fidelity of his miniſtrations, the exhortations from the pulpit, and the virtues of life, "by which being dead he yet ſpeaketh," you will remember with ſentiments of attachment to his name, and ſerious conſideration. Great ſerious conſideration is this funeral ſuited to awaken in your minds. Hath the miniſtry of your pious paſtor been im-

* Wakefield's tranſlation.

improved? Have his explanations of ſacred truth been received into candid and teachable minds? Have his admonitions been ſeriouſly regarded? Death diſſolves the connection between the miniſter and his people; but it doth not ſet aſide the ACCOUNTABLENESS, which ariſeth from that connection. That ACCOUNTABLENESS remaineth. It lieth ſtill, permit me to ſay, as an *obligation* upon your minds. That ACCOUNTABLENESS will furniſh a ground of ſolemn enquiry at the great day: when the improvement of our advantages and talents will determine our acceptance and reward with the righteous judge: when an eternal ſtate will depend on our having received the meſſage of ſalvation, and known "the things of our everlaſting peace." Then may you be the joy of your deceaſed miniſter! Then may you ſtand forth ſo many virtuous and holy characters, witneſſes of his ſucceſs, before an aſſembled world, "his glory and crown of re-"joicing in the day of the Lord."

To us all who are engaged in the ſame ſervice of Chriſt Jeſus, from the reſpective congregations to whom we miniſter, may an holy, triumphant band of thoſe whom we have ſerved in the goſpel, enlightened and faithful diſciples of Chriſt, then preſent themſelves before the throne

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and before the Saviour, monuments of our ſucceſsful labours, and trophies of the efficacy of that "everlaſting goſpel," which we preach.—The hope is gladdening: let the occaſion, which leads us to entertain and cheriſh it, admoniſh and warn us, to decline no labour, to ſacrifice every allurement, to "count not even our lives dear to "us, if we can finiſh our courſe with joy, and "and the miniſtry we have received from our "Lord Jeſus Chriſt, to teſtify the goſpel of the "grace of GOD." Let it warn us, while life and ability for ſervice are continued, to be diligent and fervent in preaching Chriſt Jeſus, "who "is among you*, the hope of glory." Let it warn and engage us to preach as dying men to dying men the *eternal truths* of the *eternal* GOD.

The ETERNAL TRUTHS of the ETERNAL GOD—what ſolemnity and importance in theſe ſounds! With what ſerioufneſs ſhould *you* hear as well as *we* preach them! Death inſtructs us, that theſe are the truths, in which, when all other knowledge ceaſeth, we have an intereſt.—Theſe are the truths which are eſſential to the comfort of our minds under the ſorrows of mortality, to our conduct in life, and to our happineſs beyond the grave. The day approacheth which

* Parmi vous. Le Clerc.

will re-publiſh theſe truths, and fix the ſtamp of *eternity* upon their importance. That will be the day, on which "every one ſhall receive ac-"cording to his works, done in the body, whe-"ther good or evil." Are we ready and prepared for it? How are we able to give up our account? Are we fit to deſcend into the grave? Are we prepared to riſe out of it, with hope and joy as the ſons of GOD and the heirs of glory?

Let each of us go away even from the grave, aſpiring to this felicity and glory beyond it.—GOD grant, that we may, on ſuch occaſions, be able to go away even from the grave, rejoicing in the teſtimony of a good conſcience; in "the "hope of the glory of GOD, to be revealed in the "laſt day, and of the mercy of our Lord Jeſus "Chriſt unto eternal life:" with humble hope of of this happineſs, through the riches of divine grace, may we go away rejoicing! *Amen.*

PRAYER.

ALMIGHTY and eternal GOD, the Moſt High, who liveſt for ever; whoſe dominion is an everlaſting dominion; and whoſe kingdom is from generation to generation: before thy throne

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we humbly bow, as creatures, whoſe foundation is in the duſt, and whoſe life is but as a ſhadow, which ſoon paſſeth away. Thou haſt breathed into man the breath of life, and at thy command it departeth, and we return to the duſt, out of which thou haſt formed us. With all reverence and ſubmiſſion, we acknowledge thy ſovereign right in us, and would yield ourſelves to thy wiſe and merciful diſpoſals. "Thy judgments "are right, and in faithfulneſs doſt thou afflict "the children of men." Humbly may we reſign to that ſentence, which hath "appointed "unto all men once to die." With ſerious and reflecting minds, may we meditate on that mortality, which reigneth around us, which hath reigned through all ages, and which will reign till "the laſt enemy, death, ſhall be deſtroyed." In thy view, O eternal GOD, what is our life, but as nothing before thee? "Thou art from "everlaſting to everlaſting, the ſame yeſterday, "to-day, and for ever, without any variableneſs, "or ſhadow of turning." Thy eternal nature, thy eternal goodneſs is the foundation of our hope, through every period of our exiſtence, and beyond this life, which, as a vapour, vaniſhes away.

We thank thee, we praiſe thee, O merciful GOD, the father of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, who

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is the reſurrection and the life, that, in this land of frailty and change, in this land of darkneſs, in this region of the ſhadow of death, where we ſee the grave is the houſe appointed for all living; we rejoice, with fervent gratitude, that, notwithſtanding theſe appearances, "life and immortality "are brought to light by the goſpel," that "by "the reſurrection of Jeſus Chriſt from the dead, "we are begotten" again to a new and animating hope, even "the hope of an inheritance, eternal, "incorruptible, and undefiled that fadeth not "away." We rejoice, GOD of all grace, in thy mercy; that "as in Adam all die, ſo in Chriſt "ſhall all be made alive; and death ſhall be "ſwallowed up in victory."

Cheered and ſupported by theſe conſolations, may we piouſly reſign ourſelves to thy providence, removing from us our friends and relatives into darkneſs. Teach us, O GOD of all compaſſion, when the dear and valuable ties of life are broken, to bear thy wiſe and righteous will; and ſo to compoſe our ſpirits, that we may not ſink under our ſorrows. Pour conſolation into the boſoms of thoſe who now mourn. Eſtabliſh the faith of thy ſervants in the everlaſting goſpel.—May their faith in Chriſt, who preached the words of eternal life, ſooth their grief: ſupported by this faith,

faith, may they look forward to that glorious morning, when thoſe who ſleep in Jeſus thou wilt bring with him, and raiſe to eternal life.—Diſpoſe and animate them to follow the friend and the parent, who hath gone before them, exemplifying the Chriſtian character, in the ſame exerciſe of faith, benevolence, and piety. May the virtues of departed Chriſtians live in thoſe who ſurvive them; and the heirs of their name and fortune, be heirs with them to the ſame grace of life.

God of truth and grace, aſſiſt and bleſs thy young ſervant, whom thy providence hath called to ſucceed to his parent in the miniſtry of the goſpel. May the ſpirit of wiſdom and truth, the ſpirit of piety and zeal, dwell in him; and may the work of the Lord revive and proſper in his hands. May all thy ſervants who worſhip in this houſe of prayer, remember the words of of truth, which have been ſpoken to them.—With reſpect and affection, may they remember him who exerciſed over them the paſtoral office: acting up to the inſtructions he delivered, imitating the virtues and graces he diſplayed, "conſidering the end of his converſation:" that father and ſon may, in the day of the Lord, rejoice together,

together, with thoſe to whom they have preached the everlaſting goſpel.

O eternal ſource of wiſdom and light! "ſo "teach us all to number our days, that we may "apply our hearts to" true, heavenly "wiſdom." Impreſs our mind with a deep and ſerious ſenſe of the ſhortneſs and frailty of human life. Awaken our devout concern, awaken our diligence, awaken our zeal for things unſeen and eternal. Give us underſtanding to diſcern, and reſolution to purſue, "the things of our everlaſting peace, "before they ſhall be for ever hid from our eyes." "The work which thou haſt ſent us into the "world to do, may we do with all our might, "before the night of death cometh, when no "man can work." May the life we live in the fleſh, be a life of faith in Jeſus Chriſt, of benevolence and ſobriety, of integrity and devotion. When we come to die, may thy rod and thy ſtaff comfort us. May we die full of peace and hope. And, on the morning of the reſurrection, awake to life and glory, according to thy mercy and promiſes in Chriſt Jeſus. Through whom be given unto thee, our heavenly father, the king immortal, glory and praiſe, through all ages of the world. *Amen.*

FINIS.